Similarly robots are being considered for applications injurious to health like painting and welding. The emphasis therefore will be on contribution to a healthy work environment and the safety of workers through robotics.

Removal of Anomaly in Fixation of Pay on Promotion

4956. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the provisions of the DP & AR O. M. No. F. 7/1/80- Estt. P.I. dated September 26, 1981 regarding fixation of pay of a Central Government employee on his promotion to the next higher grade/post, read with their O. M. No.F. 13/26/82. Estt. P.I. dated 8.2.1983 are applicable where both the senior and Junior Government servants are entitled to the benefits of F.R. 22 C;

(b) if so, whether in cases where both the senior and junior Government servants have exercised similar options or have not exercised the option at all and the pay has been fixed under FR 22C and still there is anomaly, can't be set right by applying the basic principles contained in the Ministry of Finance O.M. No. F. 2(78)- EIII (A)/66 dated 2.2.1966; and

(c) if so, the time by which the Government propose to issue necessary clarificatory instructions in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Exercising option is the right of an individual. Once an individual exercises option, his pay is fixed accordingly. Thereafter the individual has no right to claim any further benefit with reference to pay of another Government servant. However, Government as a special case, allows removal of the anomaly based on basic principles of OM dated 2.2.1966 in case the option of senior and junior is same and other conditions are also fulfilled.

(c) No clarification is called for.

[*Translation*]

Constitution of Nyaya Panchayata

4957. SHRI RAM NARAIN BERWA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the States where the Nyaya Panchayats have been constituted as per the Bhagwati Committee recommendations; and

(b) whether the Government propose to issue directives for constituting such Panchayats to the States where those have not yet been constituted?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b). A Committee constituted in 1976 under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice Bhagwati recommended in Chapter VI of their report formation of Nyaya Panchayats and Lok Nyayalayas in the States. Panchayati Raj Acts of eighteen States have provision for establishment of Nyaya Panchayats. Government of India has not issued any directive to the States to set up Nyaya Panchayats. However, a proposal for restructuring of Panchayati Raj institutions including Nyaya Panchayats is engaging the attention of Government of India.

Backwardness of Villages

4958. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have fixed any criteria to determine the backwardness of the Villages in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Bihar leads in the matter of backwardness of villages in the country; and

(d) the steps being taken by the Government to remove the backwardness of villages in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL): (a) and (b). There is no definite criteria for determination of the extent of backwardness of villages in the country. Rate of Literacy, level of health services, incidence of poverty, percentage of SC/ST population to total population, percentage of agricultural labourers are however some of the indicators of extent of backwardness.

(c) As per the latest estimates of the Planning Commission, 42.7% of rural population in Bihar is below the poverty line as compared to 33.4% of the entire country. The case of Orissa is even worse where the level of rural poverty is as high as 48.3%. As per data available from 43rd round of NSSO survey on employment unemployment, the incidence of usual principal status unemployment in rural Bihar is 2.40% which is lower than that of the rural areas of Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

As regards the level of other indicators of backwardness of rural areas, though Bihar is backward, it is not at the bottom. Bihar's level of rural literacy is better than that of Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Bihar has a lower level of infant mortality than Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

(d) The funds to State Governments including Bihar are earmarked on the basis of comprehensive criteria which include the total population of the State, incidence of poverty, percentage of SC/ST population to total population, percentage of agricultural productivity.

Government's strategy for rural development focus on eradication of rural poverty, improvement of employment opportunities in rural areas, provision of drinking water facilities and sanitation and creation of other basic amenities in rural areas. For this purpose Anti-poverty Programmes, Area Development Programmes and Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) are being implemented.

[*English*]

Indo-Mauritius Joint Study on Meteorological System

4959. SHRI BALRAJ PASSI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Mauritius have conducted joint studies on meteorological systems and exchanged information and scientists in various scientific disciplines, if so the details thereof;

(b) whether a bilateral agreement has also been signed in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details of the bilateral agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) Sir, No such joint studies have been conducted, nor have there been any exchanges of scientists in this field. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) exchanges meteorological information with other countries, including Mauritius, as part of the ongoing global data exchange